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ABSTRACT

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 redesigned federal job-training programs to create a more comprehensive and accessible public workforce program. This strategy brief explains the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), outlines strategies for leveraging WIA funds, and provides examples of out-of-school time (OST) programs benefiting from WIA support. The report notes that at state and local levels, Workforce Investment Boards create the administrative infrastructure for the WIA, advising governors on developing a statewide workforce system plan. When the U.S. Department of Labor approves the plan, it releases funds to state Workforce Investment Boards, which then distribute funds to more than 600 local Boards. Most OST programs obtain WIA funds through Youth Formula grants, Youth Opportunity grants, or set-aside funds. Local Boards must use a competitive process to distribute funds to service providers. The report highlights ten required services that guide funding decisions: academic enhancement skills, alternative secondary school services, summer employment opportunities, work experience and internships, occupational skills training, leadership development opportunities, support services, adult mentoring, follow-up services for one year following participation, and comprehensive guidance and counseling. OST programs are eligible for WIA youth funds if they serve or hire youth who are between ages 14 and 21, are low-income, and have one of 6 identified employment barriers. The report notes that OST programs can improve funding chances by establishing programs for hard-to-serve older youth, partnering with other organizations that provide some of the 10 required services, collecting data on WIA youth performance measures, and aligning the program mission with WIA goals. Accessing WIA funds is especially recommended to expand academic programming, for community service and leadership development, and for hiring and training staff. (KB)

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Strategy Brief

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TOOLS FOR
OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME
AND COMMUNITY
SCHOOL INITIATIVES

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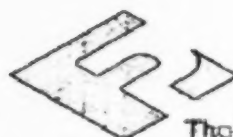
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Using the Workforce Investment Act to Support Out-of-School Time Initiatives

Strategy Brief

Adolescence is a time of increased responsibility and risk. Too old for traditional after-school programs, adolescents begin to spend more time with friends and less time under adult supervision. Criminal activity and other negative behavior begin to increase, and few options exist to engage youth in more productive activities. Although adolescence is a time when youth need adult mentors to help them navigate the way to adulthood, most out-of-school time (OST) programs that could provide such mentors are focused on elementary- and middle-school children because of funding restrictions and limitations. The challenge for programs is to access funding that allows them to respond to the developmental needs and interests of older adolescents.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) provides the opportunity for tailoring out-of-school time (OST) programs to older youth. WIA links youth development and youth employment, in keeping with research, which shows that is the most effective way to attract and retain youth. Out-of-school time programs can benefit from this opportunity by accessing funds for both staffing and services. This strategy brief explains the Workforce Investment Act, outlines strategies for leveraging WIA funds and provides examples of out-of-school time programs that benefit from WIA support.

WIA at a glance

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) redesigned federal job-training programs to create a more comprehensive and accessible public workforce system. The law is designed to help individuals find and keep good jobs by providing information, education and training, and to help employers find skilled workers. The WIA consolidated multiple funding streams to target services for three populations: adults, dislocated workers and youth. This strategy brief focuses exclusively on Title I of the WIA, The Workforce

Investment System, with an emphasis on the youth provisions and their implications for OST programs. The WIA's long-term youth development philosophy recognizes the importance of integrating youth services and ensuring stronger connections between academic learning and occupational learning. OST program directors hoping to access WIA funds will want to reinforce this link between learning and earning.

Workforce Investment Boards

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) create the administrative infrastructure for the WIA at the state and local levels. WIBs include business, labor, government and education leaders, who provide a perspective on employment needs that is unique to that state or community. Each state WIB advises the governor on developing a plan for a statewide workforce system. Once the U.S. Department of Labor approves the plan, it releases funds to the state WIB, which in turn distributes funds to the local WIBs. Nationwide, there are more than 600 local WIBs.

The WIA requires local WIBs to establish youth councils for advice on youth issues. Youth councils map existing resources, develop their own strategies for youth services, coordinate local youth activities and oversee eligible providers. They consist of representatives from business, government and labor, as well as youth-serving sectors and systems such as schools, alternative education providers, OST programs and juvenile justice programs. In some areas, youth councils have significant influence in setting the youth priorities of the local WIB, but many of the councils are still in their infancy. The reauthorization of the WIA, now before Congress, has prompted debate on the value of youth councils, and the pending reauthorization bill, H.R. 1261, the Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act of 2003, has made them optional.

BECOME ACTIVE IN YOUR LOCAL YOUTH COUNCIL

The Workforce Investment Act created youth councils to assess local youth development needs and services, and to make recommendations to the local Workforce Investment Board for where to target resources. Many councils are in the early stages of defining themselves and forging relationships with youth services providers. Out-of-school time service providers should attend meetings and seek opportunities to become members of the local youth council, in an effort to help shape the direction of future funding recommendations. Participation on the youth council does not necessarily prohibit council members from receiving funds, but it does require service providers to abstain from voting on measures that affect any potential funding.

A useful tool from Public/Private Ventures, "Impacting the Youth Council," can be found on page 22 of its publication *Supporting Youth Employment: A Guide for Community Groups*. Available on the Web at <http://www.ppv.org/pdf/files/SupportYouthGroup.pdf>.

Accessing funding—Youth Formula Grants

Most out-of-school time programs obtain WIA funds through the Youth Formula Grants. (See "Additional WIA youth funding streams" text box for two more funding options.) Local WIBs receive grants based on a funding formula that considers the local unemployment rate and the relative number of economically disadvantaged youth ages 16-21, within the WIB jurisdiction. Youth Formula Grants totaled \$1.1 billion in Fiscal Year 2002, and \$994.5 million in FY 2003.

In consultation with the youth council, the local WIB must use a competitive process to distribute the funds to service providers. Typically, local WIBs will issue an annual request for proposals, outlining their local priorities and establishing their reporting requirement. Programs selected to receive funding enter into a contract with the local WIB to deliver services to a specified number of eligible youth. To learn more about the funding process in your community, contact your local WIB. Contact information is available on the Web at <http://www.nawb.org/aspl/wibdir.asp>.

¹ The *Workforce Investment Act*, U.S. Code, title 29, sec. 2852 (b)(2)(C) (2001), defines "disadvantaged youth" as youth in households with income below either the poverty level or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level.

Required services

WIA recognizes that youth need comprehensive services in order to develop into successful adults. The law outlines ten required services to guide the local WIBs' funding of direct services. They are:

- Academic enhancement skills (study skills and tutoring);
- Alternative secondary school services;
- Summer employment opportunities;
- Work experience and internships;
- Occupational skills training;
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer activities before and after school;
- Support services (e.g., transportation and child care for eligible youths who are parents);
- Adult mentoring;
- Follow-up services for one year following participation; and
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling.

Direct service providers, the recipients of WIA funds, do not have to provide all ten services, but local WIBs must ensure all ten are available to eligible youth. OST providers are most likely to provide academic enhancement skills and leadership opportunities. Many also provide work experiences and internships

ADDITIONAL WIA YOUTH FUNDING STREAMS

Youth Opportunity Grants

If an appropriation for youth activities exceeds \$1 billion, up to \$250 million can be used for Youth Opportunity Grants. Thirty-six service areas have received five-year grants, which are awarded on a competitive basis to high-poverty areas such as Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. The pending reauthorization of WIA is expected to replace Youth Opportunity Grants with National Challenge Grants. (See "WIA reauthorization" text box.)

Amount: \$225 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2002; \$44.2 million in FY 2003.

Eligibility: All youth ages 14-21 in the target areas, regardless of income.

Required Services: The ten services outlined under the formula grants, plus establishment of at least one Youth Opportunity Community Center that puts all youth services under one roof. Grantees must provide two years of follow-up services after participation.

Set-Aside Funds

States may set aside 15 percent of the total state WIA allocation for discretionary use. This includes funds designated for other target populations (such as dislocated workers and adults). While the 15 percent comes from the total state allocation, states have flexibility on how it is used and can designate a majority of the funds for youth programs. The pending reauthorization of WIA is expected to reduce this amount to 10 percent.

Amount: Up to 15 percent of the total WIA state allocation.

Eligibility: The state WIB and governor generally determine how to spend and distribute the funds.

Required Services: Set-aside funds must pay for some services, including the administration of WIA funds and maintenance of the statewide eligible training provider list. States also have significant flexibility to use funds for incentive grants to local areas, capacity building and technical assistance. These funds are not limited to the WIA target populations.

during the summer or year-round. See the "Strategies" section of this paper for more information on OST programs as providers of direct services.

Eligibility—Youth Formula Grants

Local WIBs are responsible for identifying, evaluating and referring eligible youths to programs that provide the required services. OST programs are eligible for WIA youth funds if they serve or hire youth who:

- are ages 14-21;
- are low-income; and
- have one of the following barriers to employment:
 - School dropout;
 - Homeless, runaway or foster child;
 - Pregnant or a parent;
 - Offender;
 - Low literacy skills;
 - Unemployed and unable to secure and hold a job without additional services or training.

At least 30 percent of funds now must serve youths who are school dropouts, or graduates who are unemployed and unable to secure and hold a job without additional services. Five percent of youth may exceed income guidelines, so long as they face other barriers to employment.²⁹ The definition of eligible youth and the percentage of targeted funds will likely change with the WIA reauthorization.

Accountability

The Workforce Investment Act established a performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of state and local Workforce Investment Boards in meeting the goals of the law. Recipients of WIA funds must track progress on the performance measures set in the law.

²⁹ 29 U.S.C. § 2845(c)(5) defines those individuals as being: school dropouts, deficient in basic skills, one or more grade levels below that appropriate to the age, pregnant or a parent, disabled (including learning disabled), homeless or a runaway youth, offenders, or youths who face serious barriers to employment as identified by the local board. § 2871 (b)(2)(A).

Performance measures for eligible youth ages 14-18 are:

- attainment of basic skills and, as appropriate, work readiness or occupational skills;
- attainment of secondary school diplomas and their recognized equivalents; and
- placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced training; or placement and retention in military service, employment or qualified apprenticeships.

Performance measures for eligible youth ages 19-21 are:

- entry into unsubsidized employment;
- retention in unsubsidized employment six months after entry into the employment;
- earnings received in unsubsidized employment six months after entry into the employment; and
- attainment of a recognized credential relating to achievement of educational skills.

Customer satisfaction for both participating youth and their employers is a measure of performance, as well. In addition, state and local WIBs are empowered to add their own performance measures. Consult your local youth council to determine which measures your state and local WIB use to measure performance.

Strategies

OST programs are most likely to provide three of the ten required services defined under the Youth Formula Grants: academic programming, community service and leadership development, and employment and internships. These strategies are detailed later in this brief, but programs can improve their chances for accessing WIA funds in the following four ways:

1. Establishing programs for hard-to-serve older youth, putting the programs in a better position to receive funds now and sustain funding in the future. WIA gives special attention to youth who have dropped out of high school, and graduates who are unemployed and unable to secure and hold a job without additional services. Current law requires local WIBs to ensure that 30 percent of the funds serve youth fitting this definition, a percentage that likely will increase in future years. (See "WIA reauthorization" section for more information on proposed changes.)
2. Partnering with other organizations that provide some of the ten required services will improve chances for funding by offering youth a more com-

prehensive and coordinated program of services. OST programs seeking to partner should become active in their youth council to learn who else receives funding and to understand the priorities of the local WIB. (See "Become active in your youth council" text box.)

3. Collecting data on the WIA youth performance measures. (See "Accountability" section for more information.) All recipients of WIA funds must collect this information. OST programs already collecting the data demonstrate their ability to collect data, and their effectiveness in impacting these performance areas.
4. Aligning the program mission with the goals of WIA. Serving older youth, especially high-risk youth, should be a priority of the program and not just an add-on to serving younger children. Hire staff members dedicated to the older youth population and design services that meet their needs, instead of simply expanding a program developed to serve elementary- and middle-school students.

Access WIA funds to expand academic programming

Linking learning to earning is a primary goal for youth programs funded by the Workforce Investment Act. Recent research shows that linking academic programming to workforce development improves older youth attachment to programs by creating learning that has a practical, work-based focus. WIA uses this research to encourage service providers to make the connection between academic and occupational learning. Out-of-school time (OST) programs can obtain WIA funds for academic programming, if it is effective at attracting older youth and helping them develop workforce skills. WIA defines academic enhancements as "tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to completion of secondary school."ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱⁱ A 2003 evaluation of out-of-school time programs in Boston and New York showed that programs can attract older youths, and even high-risk older youth, by hiring staff dedicated to this age group, providing stipends and offering community service, leadership and job training opportunities. For more information, see: Carla Herrera and Amy J.A. Arbreton, *Increasing Opportunities for Older Youth in After-School Programs* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Public/Private Ventures, January 2003).

WIA REAUTHORIZATION

On May 8, 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1261, The Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act of 2003. This is the first step in the reauthorization process, and the following changes are expected to occur before the bill becomes law:

1. *Changing the definition of "eligible youth."* Any income requirement for high school dropouts and graduates who are unemployed would be removed, and the definition of "low-income youth still in school" would include "eligible for free or reduced-price lunch."

2. *Focusing resources on unemployed youth and school dropouts.* The percentage of funds required to go to unemployed youth and school dropouts would be increased from 30 percent to 70 percent.

3. *Replacing the Youth Opportunity Grants with National Challenge Grants.* Up to 25 percent of the youth formula funds would be reserved for a federally administered National Challenge Grant program. Cities and rural areas would need to demonstrate partnerships, show financial contributions from a variety of sources, including the education and business communities, and include "best practices" as part of the program design.

4. *Making Youth Councils optional.* Governors and chief elected officials would retain the authority to sustain the youth councils, if it is believed the councils add value in their areas.

5. *Streamlining youth performance measures.* The number of performance measures would be reduced from eight to four, for all youth, regardless of age. The four would be:

- Entry into employment, education or advanced training, or military service;
- Attainment of secondary school diplomas or their recognized equivalents;
- Attainment of literacy or mathematical competence; and
- Efficiency of the program in obtaining the aforementioned outcomes.

Track the WIA reauthorization debate on the World Wide Web at the following sites:

U.S. Department of Labor: www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/reauthorization/

U.S. House of Representatives: <http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/108th/workforce/wia/wia.htm>

Workforce Alliance: <http://www.workforcealliance.org/index.shtml>

Many traditional OST programs already provide these services, but most of them target younger children.

Considerations:

Youth may be able to receive academic credit for participating in WIA-funded programs. For example, nearly 75 percent of the more than 6,000 youth in WIA-funded programs of the Philadelphia Youth Network received academic credit in 2002 for participating in them. Teachers monitor and evaluate programs to ensure the youth are eligible for academic credit.

Successful programs offer academic services on a schedule that does not interfere with paying job opportunities. This may mean offering academic services on Saturday mornings or other nonstandard times.

Access WIA funds for community service and leadership development

Community service and peer-centered activities encourage responsibility and other positive social behaviors. "Many effective youth development programs use community service as both an important form of work-based learning and as a means to reinforce the notions of personal responsibility, involvement in the community and leadership," observes David Brown, executive director of the National Youth Employment Coalition. These practical, hands-on learning experiences can range from exploring careers to empowering groups of teens to design solutions to community problems. OST programs seeking to attract older youth often include leadership development. WIA funding can help to expand or extend that capability.

THE CAFÉ MOBILE COMPUTER LAB IN JAMESTOWN, NEW YORK

The mobile computer lab at Jamestown High School is one example of how Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds can help create new academic programming that is attractive to youth. In 2002, the Jamestown Community Learning Council and Chautauqua Striders obtained a \$95,000 WIA grant to create a mobile computer lab with 20 laptop computers. The Chautauqua Striders group runs "The Café," an out-of-school time program in Jamestown and added the mobile computer lab to allow WIA-eligible youth access to technology, since most of them do not have computers at home. The lab's computers provide the youth with the tools that can help with schoolwork and allow them to take vocational classes, such as digital photography, photo editing and printing, desktop publishing, video and movie creation and editing, and Web page site design and editing. The mobility of the laptops allows Chautauqua Striders to offer the classes at multiple locations, if transportation is a problem.

Contact: Jane Murphy, Project Director
21st Century Community Schools Learning Centers
Phone: (716) 450-3059
Email: jmurphy@jamestown.wnyric.org

COMPUTER-BASED TUTORING IN MACON- BIBB COUNTY, GEORGIA

When officials with the Communities in Schools of Macon-Bibb County initiative heard about the Workforce Investment Act, they set out to create a grant-funded program that would help WIA-eligible students pass the Georgia Department of Education's standardized tests. In 2002, the group received \$100,000 from the local Workforce Investment Board to provide a Saturday morning computer-based tutorial program. They spent \$80,000 on software that helps students with reading, math and leadership skills. All of the computer modules are aligned with state academic standards, and students receive a monetary reward when they complete each module. The local WIB identifies eligible students. The WIA-funded Macon-Bibb County initiative has served forty-two students since it began. The key to success was offering the program on Saturday morning, when eligible youth were not working or looking for jobs.

Contact: Susan Milam, Executive Director
Communities in Schools of Macon-Bibb County
Phone: (478) 765-8663
Email: smilam@bibb.k12.ga.us

Considerations:

Community service and leadership activities can be designed to help the OST program as well as promote youth development. For example, older youth could tutor younger youth. Youth could also be encouraged to start a business to raise money for the program, or form an advisory group on how to develop programs to attract older youth. In Portland, Oregon, youth cre-

ated a youth advisory board that reports to the local youth council on the needs for youth programming and the effectiveness of available services.

Leadership and community service activities can be staff intensive. OST programs should hire staff members who are dedicated to and skilled in youth development strategies and who can make the connection between service and learning.

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ACES (ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILL-BUILDING)

Few programs meet all ten of the services required for Youth Formula Grants, but the ACES program at the Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, comes close. Each year 25 have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and gain valuable work experience. Youth spend one full day a week during the school year at the museum and four days a week during the summer. They may participate in ACES for three years (sophomore through senior years) and are required to make up any missed schoolwork. Each participant is assigned a staff mentor who has been trained in positive youth development. The youth learn about the museum (which targets children ages 1-7), help with the museum administration and exhibit design, and benefit from several training sessions and trips designed to enhance their leadership skills. Hands-on learning is supplemented with tutoring and homework help. Students receive a stipend equal to minimum wage for working with their mentor five hours a week during the school year, and 20 hours a week during the summer. Since 1999, WIA funds have paid for one staff person to run the program and for the student stipends. The museum provides the space, and mentors volunteer their time.

Contact: Jennifer Arnold, Youth Program Coordinator
Please Touch Museum
Phone: (215) 963-0667, ext. 3103
Email: jarnold@pleasetouchmuseum.org

Access WIA funds to hire and train staff

Successful employment is the ultimate goal of WIA-funded youth development programs. Summer employment and internships provide opportunities for youth to experience work. They also may offer the added benefit of helping OST programs with staffing shortages, especially during summer months when

enrollments increase and youth are not in school. WIA funds may be used to subsidize the wages of eligible youth who work in the program, if the work experience includes a training and development component. While the OST program might benefit from additional staff, it is necessary for the youth to benefit from the experience and improve their skills for entering the labor market.

Considerations:

Requests for funding must show the value to the youths of subsidizing their wages. Solving a staffing shortage should not be the primary reason for the funding request.

Programs that provide employment or training opportunities for youth are most successful when stable employment is an option at the end of the subsidized wage period. Youth are less likely to show commitment to the work if it is only temporary.

JOB TRAINING IN MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

In 1999, the Modesto City Schools 21st Century Alterschool Learning Programs began accessing Workforce Investment Act funds to create a job-training program for 18-to-21-year-olds. WIA youth work as mentors, recreation leaders and tutors in the 21st Century program. WIA funds pay the salary of six staff members during the school year, and more than 20 staff members during the summer. This out-of-school time (OST) program offers training that enables youth to become certified as paraprofessionals, allowing them to work as instructional aides in the schools. The Modesto City Schools system has realized its goal of creating a job-training program for older youth while bringing in much-needed staff for the OST program.

Contact: John Ervin, Alterschool Ambassador
Modesto City Schools
Phone: (209) 569-2800
Email: ervin.j@monet.k12.ca.us

Conclusion

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is a viable source of funding for OST programs serving disadvantaged adolescents ages 14-21. Providers applying for funding should design programs that link youth development and employment, and are able to track their progress in meeting WIA performance measures. Contact your local Workforce Investment Board or youth council to learn about funding opportunities, to become active in your local youth council and to monitor potential changes in the reauthorization of WIA.

Resources

Resources of The Finance Project:

Flynn, Margaret. *Title I Supplemental Educational Services and Afterschool Programs: Opportunities and Challenges*. Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, August 2002.

Friedman, Pamela. *Career Opportunities and Support Services for Low-Income, Post-High School Young Adults*. Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, September 2000.

Little, Priscilla, Sharon DuPree and Sharon Deich. *Documenting Progress and Demonstrating Results: Evaluating Local Out-of-School Time Programs*. Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project (with the Harvard Family Research Project), September 2002.

Padgett, Heather Clapp. *Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives, Revised and Updated*. Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, January 2003.

Relave, Nanette. *Youth Services Under the Workforce Investment Act*. Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, August 2002.

Wright, Elisabeth. *Finding Resources to Support Rural Out-of-School Time Programs*. Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, February 2003.

Wright, Elisabeth and Sharon Deich. *Replacing Initial Grants Tips for Out-of-School Time Programs and Initiatives*. Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, December 2002.

Other Resources

Brown, David E. *Youth Employment and Development Programs Today: Lessons from Effective Initiatives*. Washington, D.C.: National Youth Employment Coalition, Fall 2001.

Clymer, Carol, et al. *Supporting Youth Employment: A Guide for Community Groups*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Public/Private Ventures, November 2002.

Herrera, Carla and Amy J.A. Arbreton. *Increasing Opportunities for Older Youth in After-School Programs*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Public/Private Ventures, January 2003.

U.S. General Accounting Office. *Youth Provisions Promote New Services Strategies, But Additional Guidance Would Enhance Program Development*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, April 2002.

Organizations

More information is available at the following sites on the World Wide Web:

U.S. Department of Labor
http://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/

National Youth Employment Coalition
www.nyec.org

Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet)
<http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/index.html>

Center for Law and Social Policy
www.clasp.org

National Association of Workforce Board
(Contact information for state and local WIBs)
<http://www.nawb.org/asp/wibdir.asp>

Philadelphia Youth Network
<http://www.pyninc.org/>

Welfare Information Network
www.welfareinfo.org/workforce_youth.asp

Youth Council Network
<http://www.brginc.org/jcn/>

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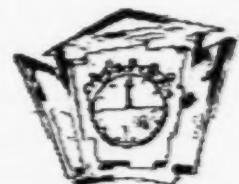
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The Finance Project

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The Out-of-School Time Technical Assistance Project

This tool is part of a series of technical assistance resources on financing and sustaining out-of-school time and community school initiatives developed by The Finance Project with support from the U.S. Child Care Bureau and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. These tools and resources are intended to assist policy makers, program developers and community leaders in developing financing and sustainability strategies to support effective out-of-school time and community school initiatives.



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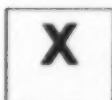


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